

the nest. He said that the snake would slither away towards some nearby holes everytime someone approached and showed no signs of aggression.

The nest was a mound of bamboo leaves at the base of a bamboo thicket. After making sure the nest was deserted, I carefully shifted aside the tightly packed dry leaves down to a depth of about 30 cm until I reached the decaying humus layer. Amongst the dark coloured moist humus lay 10 decomposed eggs. The clutch was in a bowl shaped circular depression about 30 cm in diameter, apparently made by the parent. The entire area was swarming with small black ants with their tiny white eggs, and one of the snake eggs had a maggot on it.

The eggs were leathery, dirty-white and greatly wrinkled. Three of the eggs averaged 67 x 37 mm in dimension. (We could not measure all the eggs due to the threat of elephants in the vicinity). When we returned to the site the very next day for taking photographs, all but two of the eggs had been eaten by some animal. Fragments of the eggs were strewn

about the area.

The nest was placed within 15 m of a water-hole created by a check dam. This pool is visited regularly by local people for fishing and washing, and this disturbance probably led to the nest desertion.

King Cobras are quite familiar to many of the tribals living around Top Slip. A few years ago an adult measuring "about 5 m" was run over by a lorry on the Parambikulam road about a kilometre from Top Slip. The specimen was skinned by the Forest Department and the exhibit remained in custody of the Department for some time. More recently, I picked up a 68 cm-long dead King Cobra from inside the evergreen forests of Karian Shola National Park near Top Slip. The reptile had been apparently trampled to death by some animal.

January 2, 1993

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22. RANGE EXTENSION OF THE BOMBAY SHIELD-TAIL SNAKE *UROPELTIS MACROLEPIS* (PETERS 1861) (SERPENTES: UROPELTIDAE)

On 20 October 1992, one of us (MRA) collected a dead specimen of a Uropeltid snake along the roadside, in the evergreen forests of Amboli hills (15° 52'N, 73° 56'E) (1158 m msl) in Savantvadi taluk, Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra.

The specimen, which was fresh and in good condition, was identified in BNHS as the Bombay shield-tail snake *Uropeltis macrolepis*. The specimen measured 332 mm in total length, which is more than the 300 mm described by Smith (1943), and 12.76 mm in diameter. The morphological characters are as follows: body cylindrical; tail end obliquely

truncated above, the truncated portion slightly convex and covered with mostly bicarinate scales forming a disc. Scales smooth, in 15 rows; ventrals 124; caudals 9. The body was dark purplish-brown; a short broad, yellow stripe on the lips and sides of the neck continued as large spots on the interior part of the body.

The distribution of *Uropeltis macrolepis* has been described as Bombay hills (i.e. Matheran, Khandala, Lonavla and Igatpuri) between 18° 7' and 19° 7'N by Smith (1943). A new form of this species, *Uropeltis macrolepis mahableshwarensis*, was described by Chari (1951, 1952, 1954). This form is

restricted to Mahabaleshwar. The BNHS collection records show that two juvenile specimens of *Uropeltis macrolepis* (Reg. No. 2729) have been collected from Koyna, Satara district. The present collection from the southern part of the state extends the range of distribution of this species southwards from 19°07'

to 15° 52' N in the Western Ghats.

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23. RECORD OF THE VERRUCOSE FROG *RANA KERALENSIS* (DUBOIS) IN SHOOLPANESHWAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY (BHARUCH DIST., GUJARAT)

Shoolpaneshwar wildlife sanctuary is a part of Rajpipla forest and situated on the left bank of Narmada river. The area is hilly and is located between 73° 32' & 73° 54' E and 21° 34' & 21° 32' N. During the faunal survey of this area we collected three frogs which were identified as *Rana keralensis* (Dubois) on account of the following characters: Warty dorsal surface with several glandular folds; smooth ventral surface. Moderately large head with an obtusely pointed snout projecting slightly beyond the mouth. Toes 3/4 webbed; two phalanges of the 4th toe free; outer metatarsals separated by web nearly to the base. Tibiotarsal articulation reaches nostril. Colour: brownish black above with darker markings; limbs and lips barred. Ventrally white. These frogs were seen near the streams flowing through the forest areas of Sagai and Mosda. The finding constitutes a new record of this species in Gujarat.

Collection details: (a) Sagai, 12. x .91, (b)

Mosda, 15.iii.92, by K.R. Vinod and (c) Mosda, 8.xii. 91, By Y.M. Naik.

Measurements: (a) Sagai: Snout to vent length 61 mm., front limb 32 mm; hind limb 109 mm; (b) Mosda: Snout to vent length 60 mm; front limb 32 mm; hind limb 115 mm. (c) Mosda: Snout to vent length 62 mm; front limb 31 mm; hind limb 107 mm.

The verrucose frog was first described as *Rana verrucosa* by Gunther in 1875 and renamed in 1980 as *Rana keralensis* by Dubois. This little known species is considered as endemic to the Western Ghats (Daniel 1975). However this species can no longer be considered as endemic to Kerala or Tamil Nadu as its range extends further through Karnataka up to Maharashtra (Daniels, R.J. 1992). Record of this species in the above areas of Gujarat indicates that the range of this species extends at least up to the left bank of Narmada river in Gujarat.